Leadership Styles and Asian Tourism

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Leadership is the art or process of influencing people to perform assigned tasks willingly, efficiently and effectively. Enabling people to feel they have a say in how they do something results in higher levels of job satisfaction and productivity (The Importance, n.d.). There are three main factors about the definition of leadership that are important to understand. First, leadership is a social influence process. Leadership cannot exist without a leader and one or more followers. Second, leadership elicits voluntary action on the part of followers. The voluntary nature of compliance separates leadership from other types of influence based on formal authority. Finally, leadership results in followers' behavior that is deliberate and oriented in some sort of organized setting. Many, although not all, studies of leadership focus on the nature of leadership in the workplace (Reference, n.d.). There are many factors that will influence leadership styles. Leadership styles are formed by many items, but specifically one's personal experience, or upbringing, guidance received by mentors or other influential persons, and an individual's social setting.

Asian leadership styles, as opposed to Western styles, have shown tendency to exhibit more visionary, supportive, participative, command and control, and charismatic-like (transformative) behaviors (Dorfman, Howell, Hibino, Lee, Tate, & Bautista, 1997). Again, these behaviors may be molded from culture (among other things) but are also molded through history, and the social environment. For example, Confucianism in Japan requires respect and obedience to leaders who have historically responded with highly paternalistic attitudes towards their subordinates. Japanese organizations tend to be highly organized and rigid (Hayashi, 1988). This paper will explore the Asian tourism market, cultural differences, successful leaders, their leadership styles, and look into the future of leadership in Asian Hospitality.

Comprised with 30% of global land area and 60% of the world's current human population, Asia has been recognized of being the world's largest and most populous continent. Although the Asia continent is subdivided into 48 countries, most of the tourism and vacation destinations are densely placed in the regions of eastern and southeastern Asia. In 2012, the Asia-Pacific region lured more international arrivals to its shores with an estimate of as many as 350 million international arrivals, and visitor numbers are prospectively rising steadily (DeHart, 2013)

The emerging roles of China and India in the world economy over the past decade have offered the opportunity to many regional economies to accumulate wealth. According to the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), Asia now accounts 40% of global tourism spending. With high volume of international arrivals in the region, hospitality plays a vital role in impressing tourists from around the globe.

The rapid growth of international tourism is likely to have significant cultural implications everywhere, particularly in South-east Asia, where societies are deeply divided culturally and where tourism has taken up culture as a major marketable attraction (Wood, 1980). Attention to the cultural consequences of international tourism is relatively important. There has been a debate whether the original cultures should be preserved or western culture, ethnocentrism and romanticism, should be taken into consideration in adapting the cultures.

The shift in tourism demographics demonstration that the changes are similar to those that already happened in Europe and America, the businesses that learned from what happened in those two markets could have opportunities to prepare themselves for the next decades in this region. There is increased attention to facilities development, asset management, market segmentation and use of new technologies, which the recent economic turmoil in Asia will no

doubt produce new challenges, as well as opportunities, in the lead up to the next millennium (Hing et al, 1998). Challenges for Asian market businesses have emerged since international businesses, especially in the hospitality industry, have to maintain their brand standards while also understanding and addressing the diverse expectations of customers across the market. Hence, leaders in any business sector would play crucial roles in leading businesses to actively note differences between Asian and Western customers when it comes to overall service expectations and customer experiences. Important leadership styles and practices in the emerging Asian tourism and hospitality market will be examined later in the paper.

Because of the increasing of international travel and rapid growth in the worldwide usage of the internet, the leadership practices in Asian countries and Western countries have become more closely aligned over time. However, due to the importance of social environment, there is a tendency in Asian countries that leaders choose appropriate behavior according to the situation (Liden, 2011). High collectivism reveals a cultural proclivity toward focusing on what is best for the large group or collective rather than for individuals. Therefore, the interactions between leaders and followers are heavily associated with the surrounding environment. Moreover, leaders in the Asian countries have a tendency to maintain social distance between themselves and their subordinates. Indeed, there is an emotional distance between them and their subordinates because of status and power inherent in their positions. Part of this adherence to maintaining distance from employees involves the use authoritarian control to ensure the compliance of followers, which is consistent with the paternalistic leader approach (Liden, 2011). Interestingly, during the time that distance is maintained and authoritarian control is applied, leaders in Asian countries also illustrate paternalistic benevolence in their treatment of employees. The reason leaders have a paternalistic leadership style is because in some Asian

countries, especially China, Japan, South Korea and India, the leadership style is tied to the central role that family plays their culture. For instance, Chinese companies often attempt to act as the "work family," and since China is a patriarchal society, the leader prototypes of Chinese firms tend to be males—essentially father taking care of their family. Therefore, leaders often act as a "father" role in their organizations (Pellegrini & Scandura 2008).

Influenced by the Confucian characteristics of hierarchy, morality, family obligation, control and respect, many Chinese hoteliers have revealed a paternalistic leadership style (Chow, 2004; Redding 2002). Most of them treat their staffs as their children, and want their employees to be the best they can be (Westwood, 1992). Another aspect illustrated by Chinese hoteliers who have a paternalistic leadership style is the absence of structured career planning and pathways available to employees. Caused by the 'moderation' of Confucian value, leaders want their staffs to make contributions to their careers, they try not to select one employee over another. That is, leaders sometimes attempt to minimize recognition and not encourage different personalities of staffs to maintain 'moderation' among employees.

Beside hoteliers in China, Rai Bahadur Mohan Singh Oberoi is another hospitality leader in India that has paternalistic trait. The relationship between his subordinates and him mirrors the father-children relationship. In order to enrich his executives' hospitality knowledge and practice their working capability, Oberoi send them for training in United States and Europe. During 1965, he established his own management school, which provides a two-year study program. The school not only provides study opportunities for Oberio's employees, it also accepts applications from Asia, Africa, and Middle East. Oberio's benevolences show the soft side of the leader who reveals personal concerns for employees and cares about subordinates' personal welfare.

Transactional leadership can be defined as understanding employee needs, providing for those needs to reward employee contributions and hard work, and committing to giving those rewards after employees complete assigned work duties. Both employees and leaders recognize performance and effort, given an agreement with the leadership outlining obligations. This transaction requires trust. Transactional leadership categorizes trust into cognitive trust and affective trust. Cognitive trust is the trust produced through an objective evaluation of losses and benefits based on personality traits, reliability, and the strength of the relevant abilities of other subjects (McAllister, 1995).

Typically, employees under a transactional leader are more concerned about fairness in results, which indirectly affects their level of trust in their leader because their relationship with their leader is based on the results of their own efforts (Chen, 1995). Redding has pointed out that managerial leadership among overseas Chinese is primarily transactional, not charismatic (1990). Subordinates are expected to exhibit loyalty, diligence, conformity and behaviors that enhance the superiors' face. The loyalty and devotion of subordinates derives from cultural history, not from an inspirational charismatic leader. However, leaders at the very top of an organization may create a vision that inspires followers (Redding, 1990). An example of a transactional leader is Belinda Yeung. She exemplified other leadership traits, but specifically, she was transactional in the beginning of her career at Royal Hotels.

Belinda Yeung Bik Yiu is currently the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of Regal Hotels and her career started in 1987. Her responsibilities as Chief Operating Officer include overseeing operations of all Regal Hotels in Hong Kong as well as China's Mainland. When she became the Chief Operating Officer, the company had seven Hotels – since 2007, she has grown the company to have over twenty Hotels. She has also been Head of Human

Resources Department of the Century City International Holdings Group since 1992.   She

attended the University of Houston for her education. Belinda Yeung is a member of the

Election Committee for HKSAR Chief Executive Election, Deputy Chairman of Executive

Committee of the Federation of Hong Kong Hotel Owners, Chairman of the Advisory

Committee of the School of Hotel & Tourism Management of Hong Kong Polytechnic

University and President from 2010 – 2011 of Rotary Club of Hong Kong Harbor (Management,

n.d.). Belinda Yeung had a couple of different leadership styles. During the expansion stage of

Regal Hotels, she needed to be situational and implement a transactional leadership style to

manage the changes successfully. In order to motivate her team, she needed to use

transformational leadership skills.

During change management, transactional management is needed to manage the details

of the change. Transactional leaders are practical, direct, and manage details. Belinda needed to

use this skillset to be able to manage the expansion from seven to twenty Hotels. She had also

expanded the management team from ten employees to thirty. Belinda also most likely needed

to use a command and control style, especially since she was in China and was in an uncertain

time. This type of leadership style is best used in top-down interactions where the leader is the

sole decision maker. Not every interaction needs to be collaborative.

Transformational Leaders are the leaders that everyone studies because they make such a

large change to their organization that people can't help but be amazed. By definition,

transformational leaders are those who "stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve

extraordinary outcomes and in the process develop their own leadership capacity" (Bass, 2006).

This style of leadership does not focus solely on getting the job done, but is instead focused on

bringing about a large change that will radically alter the status quo. Other leadership styles

concentrate on the completion of a task. Transformational Leadership however, goes beyond that goal to a place where people are changed because of their interaction and integration into the values of the leader.

The traditional notion of social exchange between a leader and his or her followers is surpassed by transformational leadership (Bass, 2006). The followers whole-heartedly believe in the values associated with that leader to the point that they themselves are changed. This alignment of values and mission between the leader and the followers is the most astounding aspect of the transformational leadership style. Transformational leadership "helps followers grow and develop into leaders" (Bass, 2006). In the work place as well as social settings, transformational leaders can move followers to exceed expected performance, as well as lead to high levels of follower satisfaction and commitment to the group or organization" (Bass, 2006). High levels of commitment and satisfaction drive motivation to see a goal achieved. Followers of transformational leaders embody the mission of the group until it becomes their own mission and will not be stopped until they see the end result they desire.

After thinking of big social movements that have brought about great change in the world it is easy to identify many transformational leaders. Gandhi and Mother Theresa were both transformational leaders. But transformational leadership does not only exist on that grand of a scale. Many of today's top CEO's can be considered transformational leaders. Robert Iger brought about a company cultural shift that internalized the Disney spirit in all of his cast members. Transformational is important in every setting1. Even going down to the community level, inspiring coaches and teachers can be transformational leaders. Transformational leaders function well and achieve results in every scenario.

Visionary leaders have a clear plan and direction of their company and in some cases the entire industry. Visionary leaders are those that can clearly see what is happening socially or economically in their industry, nation or globally (Types, 2014). There are many examples of industry leaders who aspire to become visionary leaders, however there are very few who are able to turn that vision into reality. Since we are specifically looking at the Asian tourism industry we will explain how visionary leaders operate in the market as well as several specific examples of visionary leaders in the Asian tourism market.

The Asian tourism market is a ripe region for possible visionary leaders. Since the Asian market is relatively young, in comparison to more developed markets in the United States and Europe, the Asian market has more options for visionary leaders. This is especially true given the times we currently are in with the rapid expansion of technology. Technology makes it easier for visionary leaders to be successful in business, since there are increases in possibilities for new ideas. There are many examples of visionary leaders in the Asian tourism market. We will look at a few in the following paragraphs.

Many of the visionary leaders in the Asian Tourism Market are involved in the Asian hotel industry. There are two visionary leaders in the Asian Hotel industry that we would like to highlight. The first is Rai Bahadur Mohan Singh Oberoi and the second is Che-woo Lui (Shea, 2009). Both of these leaders saw an opportunity in the hotel industry in their respective areas, India and Hong Kong, and took advantage of that opportunity to revolutionize the hotel industry. Oberio is an example of a leader who had the vision to transform the Indian hotel market by seeing a need for an upscale market and by collaborating with an internationally known company like Sheraton (Shea, 2009). He also revolutionized women's role in the Indian hospitality industry and being the first to employ them (Shea, 2009). This is a major

accomplishment given the Asian male dominated society. As a result of wars and changes in the political climate in Asia, the region is open and ready for changes in the system. Lui is an excellent example of this and a visionary leader. Lui saw the changing environment time and time again and utilized this vision to become a successful business man. Like Oberio, Lui saw the advantage of joining in with other international hotel organizations to create partnerships (Shea, 2009).

There are also visionary leaders who are in the Asian market who are not from Asia. A prime example is Steve Wynn. Wynn is now one of the largest gaming leaders in Asia. His two hotels and casinos, Wynn and Encore, in Macau are some of the largest and most profitable in Asia (Steve, 2013). He brings a visionary leadership style to the market from his experience in the US gaming industry. He will be examined more closely in a following article. All three leaders demonstrate a vision and leadership that saw into the future of the Asian hotel and tourism industry and used that vision to create very successful visions.

Asia Pacific region is now regaining its leading position on the global stage that it last held before the Industrial Revolution. According to WTTC, by 2020, two out of every five travelers are expected to be from Asia and will account for nearly half of global tourism expenditure. Increasing travel and tourism in Asia will promote both the leisure and business fronts; there will be more travelers, jobs, flights, revenue and more consumer needs.

In the past, travel in Asia usually has been undertaken through packages in large groups sold in organized business groups in bulk. While in the future, across the country will become increasingly different. Travelers would be in smaller groups, and for a wider or more specific range of reasons, with different requirements and aspirations from the travel experience. As a

service supplier, hotel industry has to customize their offerings to meet the needs of specific individuals, based on their profiles and past behavior.

Moreover, with the emergence of new technology and infrastructure, mobile devices, 4G networks, high speed rail and social media are playing more and more important roles for Asia travelers. By using new research and making travel arrangements to manage their travel experience at very short notice, travelers will get much greater flexibility. On the other hand, it also will create less predictability for all travel providers. These trends force hotels to make changes in the way that they interact with customers, like allowing mobile transactions, offering promotion through social media sites, and encouraging value co-creating with customers, in order to enhance the value and perceptions of their brands.

As for the dominant leadership style in the hotel industry in the future, visionary leadership that implies a clear plan and direction of company or even the entire industry, probably will gradually dominate. Visionary style leadership hinges on visualizing or imagining a future that is both actual and achievable. This is helpful in planning an organization's strategic future since visionary leaders will contribute more. The giant improvement in the economy and in technology brings more possibilities and opportunities, which will be helpful for visionary leaders to make more contributions.

The Asian tourism market is a growing sector that has seen and is seeing many different types of leaders. There have been transactional, transformational, visionary, and paternalistic leaders throughout the Asian tourism market. In the coming years, there will be many shifts in the Asian tourism market and we believe there will be more room for visionary leaders to shape the market.

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